

Markey co-sponsors resolution that would stop automatic boost for 2011

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"With unemployment high and so many Colorado families struggling to make ends meet, it is unconscionable to think that Congress is considering giving itself a pay raise," Markey said in a prepared statement. "Our country is in the middle of an economic crisis, and our elected leaders need to do the right thing."

Current law calls for members of Congress to get an annual cost-of-living raise each year, unless the House and Senate vote to block the raise. That's happened seven times since the law took effect in 1989.

The last raise for Congress took effect in January 2009, when the annual pay for most members went from \$169,300 to \$174,000.

Markey was among more than 100 co-sponsors of a bill that would have blocked that raise, but the bill never made it out of committee. Instead, an omnibus appropriations bill passed in the summer blocked a congressional pay raise for 2010.

If Congress hadn't frozen its 2010 pay, member raises would have been tied to a measurement of civilian wages called the Employment Cost Index tracked by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. As of September, the index showed civilian wages rising 1.5 percent for the past year.

The latest bill co-sponsored by Markey, House Resolution 4225, would block any congressional pay increase for 2011. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Harry Mitchell, D-Ariz., currently has 21 co-sponsors.

Cost-of-living adjustments for Social Security recipients are tied to another measure called the Consumer Price Index, the nation's primary inflation measurement. But because the CPI declined this year, Social Security recipients won't get a cost-of-living increase in 2010.